'Billy' and the Beast

Little Billy from the "Family Circus" cartoon strip has become a real artist.

Glen Keane, whose dad Bil brought him to comic life as Billy, was an animator for Walt Disney's "Beauty and Beast" and created the Beast character.

He also had a hand in the special "Beauty and The Beast Christmas Story" comic strip which begins today at the bottom of this page and continues through Christmas Day.

In addition, the younger Keane, 38, did animation work for "The Little Mermaid" and the just-released "Aladdin," now playing at Showcase Cinemas in Davenport and Milan. He has worked for Disney for 16 years.

The award-winning "Beauty and the Beast," now on videotape, broke records for an animated film in theaters across the country.

"It took about a year to design the character," Glen Keane said. "I wanted the Beast to look mean, but he also had to have the potential to love and be loved by a beautiful woman."

Says his father: "Glen was one of our five little 'beasts' who inspired me with ideas for my cartoons. Now he has created a beast of his own. Thank heavens he doesn't claim that the inspiration for the Beast was his dad!"

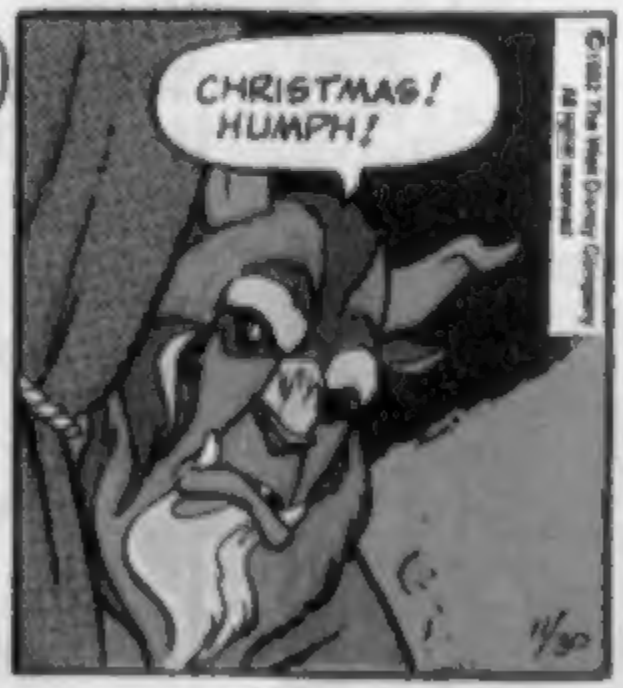
Keane brought Billy to the comics page in his strip that began in 1960 and runs daily in the *Times*. On occasion he even had little Billy "fill in" for him when he was on vacation.

Those strips (drawn by Bil, but in the style of Billy) were among the most popular in the strip's history.

Bil Keane believes his son's work, particularly on the Beast, is a masterpiece. "Glen's Beast is a very innovative and perceptive translation of what the character was."

Glen Keane, the model for "Billy" and the "substitute artist" who filled in for Daddy in "Family Circus" cartoons, grew up to become a real artist.

'A BEAUTY AND THE BEAST CHRISTMAS'



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